

Libby 001



Libby park cleanup back on track

By Brent Shrum

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Discussions between the city of Libby and the Environmental Protection Agency on final cleanup plans for Riverfront Park appear to be back on track.

In a letter sent last week to Mayor Doug Roll, regional Superfund program director Bill Murray indicated that the agency is willing to accept the city's request for the extension of a deadline previously set by the EPA for a signed access

agreement.

"We understand that you would like to move forward with remediation of the property as soon as possible," Murray wrote. "You have also indicated that a short delay to the schedule is necessary to allow the city to complete their engineering work with respect to a preliminary drainage and grading plan, the location of planned utility corridors, and the location and approach of the access road. We have

appreciated the opportunity to work with WGM Group, your engineering firm, and look forward to another meeting with you on April 12 to reach agreement on the design."

Murray said he expects a final design, which can be used as the basis for the city's consent for access, to be ready by the end of April. A draft agreement for the remediation project, including a detailed scope

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iof work, should be ready for the city to review by next week, Murray added.

In a Feb. 28 letter, EPA remedial project manager Rebecca Thomas had asked Roll to return a signed access agreement by March 14, adding that if a signed agreement was not received by that date, the agency would consider that a refusal by the city to allow access for remediation of the

property. Roll returned a one-word response - "Nuts!" - echoing the reply given by an American general to a German demand for surrender during the Battle of the Bulge in World War II.

Roll said he had been taken aback by what he perceived as the letter's threatening tone. In a subsequent meeting with Thomas and other EPA officials, Roll and the city

council asked that the deadline be extended to allow WGM Group, which had only recently been picked to help carry out the city's planned improvements to the park, to work with the EPA on the remediation project.

Plans for the park call for

moving the access road to Expand park space between the road and the Kootenai River. Other changes include the addition of more parking spaces, a children's play area, a band gazebo, improved boat launching facilities, and a retail shop area next to the rail spur.

